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*--photography available--*

**North American Finalists Compete for Title of “World’s Best Gelato” in Gelato World Tour Finale**

**RIMINI**, Italy (Sept. 5-7, 2014) – James Coleridge of Vancouver, Canada, Matthew Lee of Austin, Texas, and Stefano Versace of Miami, Florida are packing their bags for Rimini, Italy, to compete in the Grand Finale of the Gelato World Tour Sept. 5-7 after winning the North American leg of the tour last May. Although America's three finalists have all experienced great success, their backgrounds do not suggest a future in such a sweet career. From high altitude climber to insurance broker, gelato was not on their menu.

Coleridge was building a successful career as a professional high altitude photographer and videographer when his children were born and his priorities shifted. Lee was building a career in Austin as a high tech for start up businesses when he decided to switch gears. Versace was a successful 15-year insurance broker only two years ago, but something seemed to be missing in his all-too-normal routine. "My life was very boring," Versace said.

Coleridge, Versace and Lee left their established careers and travelled to Italy to be a part of Carpigiani's [Gelato University](http://www.gelatouniversity.com). There they learned the historic art of crafting artisan gelato.

"I took the time to learn from the best at Gelato University, and I give my teachers credit. I am proud to be a custodian of the art and passion of gelato," Coleridge said.

Coleridge opened [Bella Gelateria](#) in Vancouver in 2010. Since then, he has been named "Father of Gelato Pioneers," became the first North American to win the Florence Gelato Festival and later claimed the title of 2014 International Gelato Master.

Lee opened [Tèò Espresso, Gelato & Bella Vita](#) in Austin in 2003. After a decade of service, Tèò gelato is known for its commitment to healthy ingredients and superior flavor. Versace's [Gelateria Italiana and Gourmet](#) officially opened in November of 2013, and after winning the North American segment Versace has opened two additional locations in Miami.

Coleridge, Lee and Versace won the North American Gelato World Tour last May in Austin, Texas, by earning the most combined votes of gelato specialists and the public of Austin.

In Rimini, Coleridge will prepare his signature flavor, Salted Pecan with Montmorency Tart Cherries and Tahitian Vanilla, Lee will prepare "Texas Pecan Pie" flavor, a mix of whiskey and pecans, and Stefano will prepare his signature flavor, "Profumi di Sicilia." Artisans from around the world will prepare gelato on the spot and present their flavor to the judges. The final ranking will be calculated according to the combined votes of gelato specialists and the public.

"At the end of the day, this is not about me," Coleridge said. "This is about the preservation of the art itself and protecting it from the industrial dessert world. We are custodians to the art of gelato."

The event is organized by Carpigiani Gelato University, the most prestigious Gelato School in the world, which has thirteen schools on five continents and the world's premier expo in artisan food, Sigep-Rimini Fiera. Other main partners were IFI, the leading manufacturer of showcases and MEC3, the leading manufacturer of ingredients.

To follow our artisans throughout the competition, like [Gelato World Tour](#) on Facebook.

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